

The Jazz Age

After World War I ended, a new mood swept the United States—and much of the rest of the world. The misery and death of the war were over, and it felt like time to celebrate and take life less seriously. In New Orleans, African-American and European musical influences had already mixed to create “jazz,” a new kind of music played at first in funeral processions. Soon great performers like trumpeter Louis Armstrong and singer Bessie Smith showed the whole country how good jazz could sound. The radio, developed for communication during the war, brought jazz and other entertainment to people at home for the first time.

During the 1920s, a Constitutional amendment made the sale of alcoholic beverages illegal. But this “Prohibition” was ignored in many bars called “speakeasies” where people met to talk, drink, and dance to jazz. At large, private homes, party-goers swung to the music, too, as the wealthy carefree and careless lives in fiction. At any party there were likely to be “flappers,” daring young women who wore their hair in the fashionable “bob,” raised the hems of their skirts to the knee, and did dances like the “Charleston” to the new music. American women in general gained confidence as they entered the work force in greater numbers than ever and exercised their right to vote.

Electricity reached about two thirds of homes by 1929, allowing people to use many new labor saving devices, including vacuum cleaners, washing machines, toasters, and refrigerators. With the arrival of phonograph records, people could work or play while listening to music.



Fads like flagpole sitting swept the country in the 1920s.



Organized crime increased in the 1920s when the sale of alcohol became illegal.

Jazz Age

Use good sentences and include all the words from the word box in the appropriate questions.

- 1 Explain in a few word what is Jazz music? and what made it so different than older styles?
- 2 How did Prohibition lead to an increase in crime?
- 3 Describe the American Lifestyle in the 1920's (hair, clothes, taste in music, technology)

Word List

ARMSTRONG
ELECTRICITY
FITZGERALD

FLAPPERS
FUNERAL
MUSIC

NEW ORLEANS
PROHIBITION
RADIO

RECORDS
SPEAKEASIES
WEALTHY

The Movies

The first motion pictures flickered across the screen for less than a minute. These black and white "living photographs" were made possible by the work of many inventors, including the American Thomas Edison and the Lumiere brothers of France, in the last years of the 1800s. Short movies were shown together at theaters with 5-cent admission, called "nickelodeons." As the new century began, longer movies were made, and they were shown as part of "vaudeville" performances along with singers, comics, and skit actors.

Filmmaking took a big step in 1903 when Edwin Porter created the first film that told a story, *The Great Train Robbery*. Soon actors and comics like Charlie Chaplin were turning out movie after movie. Thomas Edison built the first film studio in the United States in West Orange, New Jersey, and in 1918, producer D.W. Griffith created United Artists, the first studio that kept actors on contract.

People flocked to the movies in the 1920s, but even more viewers came after 1927 to see the first feature picture that had sound, *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson. The "talkies" captured an American audience of about 100 million every week by 1930. By the mid-1930s color movies appeared on the scene.

Most American films were produced in Hollywood, California, where the major studios were located. Movies were especially popular in the 1930s during the Great Depression, because they provided a way for people to forget their troubles. The coming of television in the 1950s reduced ticket sales, but movies revived when large theater complexes were built in the 1970s and when films on videocassette became available in the same decade.

Read the clues about the movies.

Then complete the puzzle using the word list on the next page.

Across

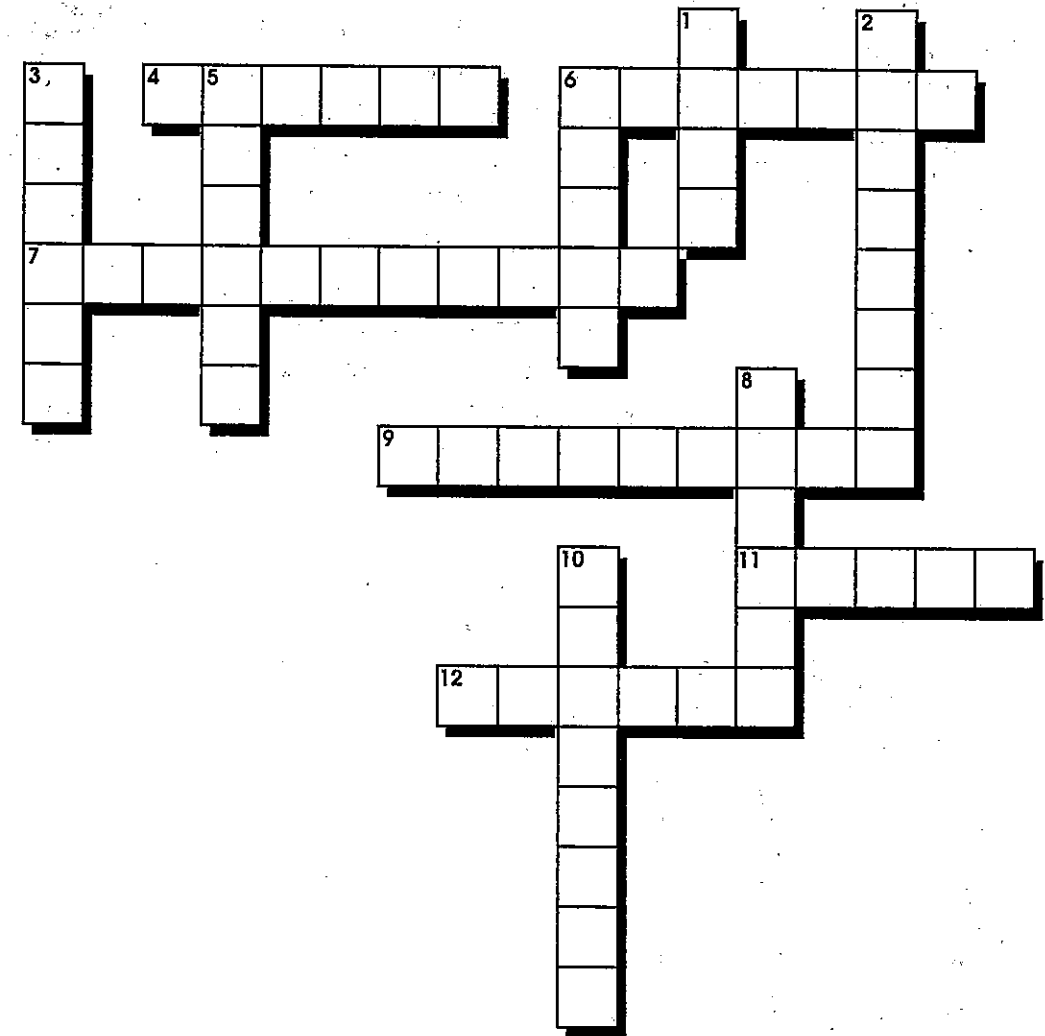
4. A place where films are produced and filmed
6. Charlie _____ was a great early film comic.
7. Name for an early movie theater where admission was 5 cents
9. The town where most films were—and continue to be—produced
11. Term for famous movie actors
12. Name of an American inventor who contributed to movie technology



These were the first "stars" to work for the first major movie studio, United Artists.

Down

1. The first talking motion picture was about this kind of singer
2. Last name of the first female studio star
3. Country of the Lumiere Brothers, who helped develop motion pictures
5. Nickname for an early motion picture with sound
6. In the mid 1930s, this made movies more appealing.
8. Name of the star of *The Jazz Singer*
10. Name of the producer who founded United Artists



Word List

CHAPLIN
COLOR
EDISON
FRANCE

GRIFFITH
HOLLYWOOD
JAZZ

JOLSON
NICKELODEON
PICKFORD

STARS
STUDIO
TALKIE

The Crash of '29

New York City's Wall Street was a very busy place during the 1920s. Flourishing business encouraged people to buy stocks (shares in a company), because stock values kept increasing. Unlike any time in history, people who had never bought stocks before began to do so. As stock values quickly rose, more people felt safe borrowing money to buy stocks, which was called "buying on margin." These people felt sure they could sell the stocks shortly to pay their debt and earn a quick profit.

On October 24, 1929, now called "Black Thursday," the stock market crash began as stock values dropped rapidly, and 13 million shares of stock were sold. Stock prices fell again on Monday, and on the next day, called "Black Tuesday," over 16 million shares of stock changed hands. People panicked, and more people wanted to sell than to buy. The giant Morgan Bank tried to restore confidence in the economic situation by buying millions of shares. After Black Tuesday, the market lost another \$10 to \$15 million in value and did not recover for a long time.

The stock market crash helped open the way to the worst economic downturn the U.S. has ever known. Many investors suffered financial ruin, especially those who had bought stocks on margin. When companies lost money as their stock prices fell, they let workers go or went out of business. Panic spread, and banks failed so that even people with savings often lost what they had. The stock market crash was not the sole cause of the poverty and misery that spread across the land, but it was a major marker of the start of the Great Depression.



President Herbert Hoover did not know what to do to keep the nation from depression.

Read the clues about the Crash of '29.

Then complete the puzzle using the word list on the next page.

Across

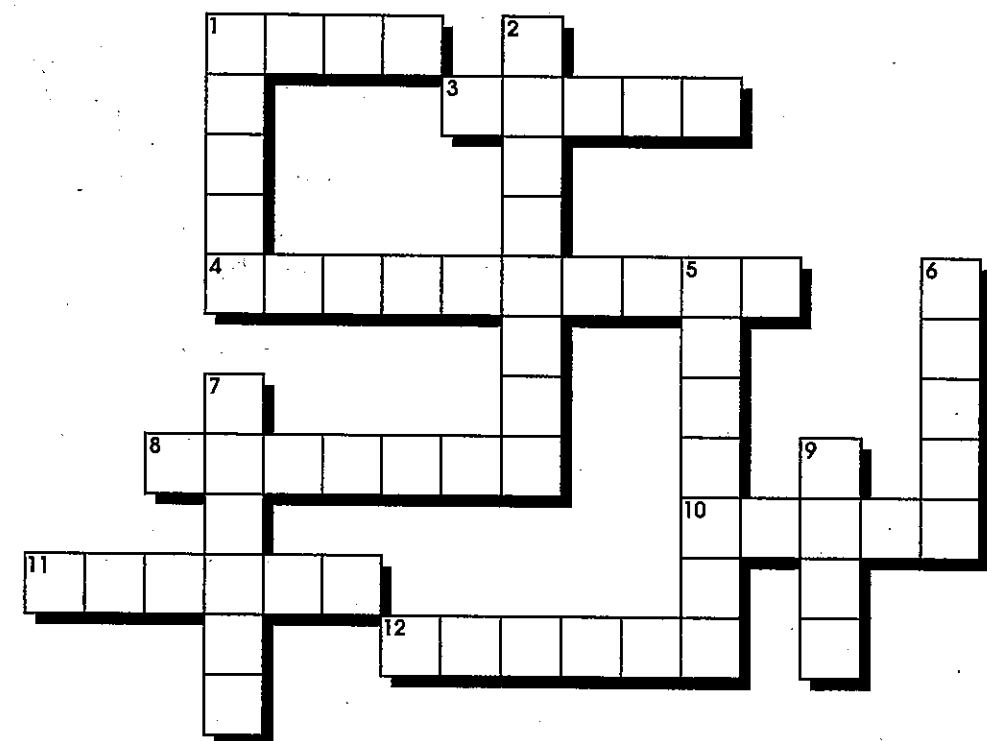
- Effort given in exchange for pay; this was hard to find during the Great Depression
- Word used for a unit of stock
- Term for a prolonged, severe time of economic inactivity and want



- State of having little money; this spread after the stock market crash.
- Color associated with the Tuesday and following Thursday of the stock market crash
- Term used for the practice of borrowing to buy stocks: "on ____"
- U.S. president during the stock market crash and the beginning of the Depression

Down

- The Great Depression struck not just one nation but most of the ____.
- Day of the week in October when the stock market fell the most
- Month of the stock market crash of 1929
- An investment in a company, which can be bought or sold
- Name of the bank that tried to keep stock prices up when the Crash of '29 began
- Name of the street where the chief stock market is located



Word List

BLACK
DEPRESSION
HOOVER
MARGIN

MORGAN
OCTOBER
POVERTY

SHARE
STOCK
THURSDAY

WALL
WORK
WORLD